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## Book Notices.

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### STUDIA SINAITICA. NO. VII.<sup>1</sup>

Few ancient convents have had so modern a history as has had that of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. Thanks to the painstaking labor of Mrs. Lewis and her sister, Mrs. Gibson, the literary treasures preserved in its ancient library have been kept from complete destruction, and many of the old documents contained therein bearing on the history of the Bible and of the early church have been made by them accessible to scholars.

Many campaigns against dust and dirt and human negligence have been made by these intrepid ladies, and the results of the campaigns are already visible in a goodly number of volumes. A general gathering place for the smaller finds has been provided in the series of *Studia Sinaitica*, of which the number now before me forms Part VII. In this Mrs. Gibson has edited the Arabic manuscript numbered 154 in her catalogue. It contains the Acts of the Apostles from chap. 7, vs. 37, the seven catholic epistles, and a theological treatise on the triune nature of God. The manuscript itself is an interesting one, if only because of its age.

From the facsimiles given, together with the text, it can easily be seen that the manuscript cannot have been written later than the ninth century. It is manifestly older than those brought back by Tischendorf from the same place and described by Fleischer, *ZDMG.*, Vol. VIII, p. 584 (= *Kleinere Schriften*, Vol. III, pp. 89 sq.), as well as those described by Oestrup (*ZDMG.*, Vol. LI, pp. 453 sq.) belonging to the University Library in Strassburg. This script approaches very nearly to the Kufic.

It is more difficult to speak of the value of this text for New Testament criticism. A great many of such Arabic translations are to be found in the various collections of manuscripts (see Nestle, *Urtext und Uebersetzungen der Bibel*, p. 155) and no one has as yet made a complete study of them. According to Gwynn and Ryssell (*TLZ.*, 1900, No. XII, col. 368) the text that we have here, as far as Acts and the three larger letters are concerned, goes back to the Peshitta, while that of the four smaller ones is related to the unrevised Philoxenian. They can therefore be of use only for the study of the Syriac text; and

<sup>1</sup>STUDIA SINAITICA. NO. VII. An Arabic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Seven Catholic Epistles, from an eighth or ninth century manuscript in the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai; with a treatise on the triune nature of God. Edited by Margaret Dunlop Gibson, M.B.A.S. London: C. J. Clay & Sons, 1899. ix + 60 + 1.v pp.

Mrs. Gibson's direct comparison with the Greek loses some of its value. In addition to this it ought to be mentioned that the text of the *Antilegomena* has already been published by Professor A. Merx (Z.A., Vols. XII, XIII) from a copy made by Mrs. Burkitt, though the readings of Mrs. Gibson are based upon the renewed collation and may be of use in fixing definitely the actual wording of certain disputed passages.

The treatise on the Trinity, of which neither title nor author is known, is also of interest as an interesting specimen of the polemics engaged in by the votaries of the Christian and Mohammedan faiths at so early a date. The author seeks to prove that the Koran, as well as the Old Testament, in many places, presupposes the Trinity.

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### STUDIA SINAITICA. NO. VIII.<sup>1</sup>

Our debt to Mrs. Gibson for the publishing of original texts is deeply increased with the present volume. It contains five texts upon three subjects. The first of these is the *Kitāb al-majāll*, "The Book of the Codices," or, as Mrs. Gibson prefers to render, "of the Rolls." It is practically an Arabic recension of the "Cave of Treasures," that curious vindication of Syrian Christianity against Jewish history and the Jews generally which has already been edited by Bezold in several forms. It thus falls into the group of Apocrypha which is headed by "The Testament of Adam," not, as Mrs. Gibson erroneously quotes Duval as saying, "The Book of Jubilees." For bibliography on this most tangled subject reference may be made to *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Vol. I, pp. 253, 261. The text here given is printed from an Arabic MS. in the library of the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai of, probably, the ninth century. With it is given a collation of a Cambridge MS., 915 in Mr. Browne's *Hand-List*. It is unnecessary to enter on the importance of this book in the development of religious legend. Its influence is deeply marked in hagiology from the Qur'ān to the Oeta Sanctorum. Second come two texts of one tale. It is the same as that of the king and the Wazir's wife in *The 1001 Nights* (Nights 578, 579 in Calcutta edition) and was taken up in that collection as part of "The Book of Sindibād." It is the same, too, with a difference, as the fifth story in the first Day of the *Decameron*. But in the present texts the king is Solomon and the Wazir is Jesus the son of Sirach, the author of Ecclesiasticus. The story seems to be widely spread as connected with these names, and, for all the anachronism, it is possible that this form is more original than the abbreviated version of "The Nights." Both texts are from Paris MSS., and one is Karshunic, but has been transliterated into Arabic by Mrs. Gibson. Other MSS. of

<sup>1</sup>STUDIA SINAITICA. NO. VIII. Apocrypha Arabica. Edited and translated by Margaret Dunlop Gibson, M.R.A.S., LL.D. London: C. J. Clay & Sons, 1901. xxxii+78+82 pp.